

- 9.20. Began to drink seawater. Eye became eluded in appearance and lid began to shut.
- 9.22. Arched neck and vomited.
- 9.23. Vomited again and fish was brought up.
- 9.25. More seawater drunk and vomited once more.
- 9.27. More seawater drunk and vomited again. Both times only fluid brought up.
- 9.30. Walked over to freshwater pool, drank several times. Then flew off.

The quick rejection of the fish is a tribute to the poisonous qualities. There are several cases in local history where humans have died through eating the fish. The behaviour of the gull indicates how immature birds are able to learn the dangers of blowfish without fatal consequences. Old birds never attempt to touch blowfish when these are thrown to them.

—V. N. SERVENTY, West Perth.

**Silver Gulls Feeding on Ants.**—Between 1630 and 1730 hours on August 19, 1956, I noticed large numbers of Silver Gulls (*Larus novae-hollandiae*) flying just above the house-tops at Como. From their behaviour it was plain that they were feeding on large alate ants since identified for me by Mr. A. M. Douglas, W.A. Museum, Perth, as *Pheidole (Anisopheidole) froggatti* Forel.

Three escape holes were found near the base of a *Banksia* stump in sandy soil and from these the alates were emerging one or two at a time at an average rate of two to three per minute from each hole. Some fluttered to the nearest vegetation and climbed several inches before taking wing, while a few were able to rise directly from the ground. Flight was almost vertical to a height of approximately 20 feet, then horizontal. The take-off was hampered in most cases by workers which moved excitedly about the escape holes, often attaching themselves by their strong mandibles to the wings or legs of the alates.

The weather at the time was clear and still with a falling air temperature. At 1715 hours the air temperature one foot above the escape holes was 64.5° F., the ground temperature standing then at 66° F. The latter was measured by a chemical thermometer thrust with its bulb six inches into the sand. When emergence commenced air and ground temperatures would probably have been almost identical.

Silver Gulls were the only birds seen. In the period of about one hour that emergence lasted they must have accounted for many thousands of ants in the Como area alone, constituting a not unimportant natural control.

Similar flights of gulls during emergence of insects have been seen south of the Swan River on two other occasions, viz., in July, 1949, over Como and in June, 1956, over a wide area extending from Applecross to East Fremantle, in each case in the afternoon. The insects on these occasions, although seen in the air, were not identified.

—M. C. RUSSELL, Como.